

Ms. Marlene Dortch
Secretary
Federal Communication Commission
445 12th St.
Washington DC 20554

Proceeding 03-167

Dear Ms. Dortch:

Recently, SBC Indiana applied to your agency for permission to provide long distance service in our state. I'm writing to you in support of that effort. I firmly encourage you and the commission to approve the SBC request so Indiana consumers and businesses can experience the same benefits of open telecommunications competition that customers in many other states now enjoy.

As Chairman of the Senate Utility and Regulatory Committee, I am very familiar with the major issues challenging the telecommunication industry today. The local phone market in this state is indeed open and competitive. In the past several years it has been a journey for all those involved but now that the process of review at the Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission has been completed and the IURC has endorsed the SBC application I am hopeful the FCC acts expeditiously and grants the SBC application request. My constituents are anxious to receive the benefits cited above.

Thank you for considering my petition on behalf of SBC Indiana. I look forward to the commission's final vote in October.

Sincerely,

James W. Merritt, Jr.
Indiana Senator